The Christian Century PULPIT

A Periodical of Contemporary Preaching

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

VOLUME XII CHICAGO, JULY, 1941 NUMBER 7

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The Unconquerable Spirit of a Great City

BY S. E. GERARD PRIESTLEY

Thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria; he shall not come into this city. . . . For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake. Isaiah 37:33, 55.

LIKE Hosea, but unlike the prophets Amos and Micah, Isaiah was essentially a man of the city. His home was in Jerusalem, and it was in the walls of that noble city that his days were spent and his work was done. At the time of our text a powerful Assyrian army stood at the gates of Jerusalem, threatening the proud city with starvation and destruction. Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, whose name spelt terror and dismay, had descended "like a wolf on the fold."

Before the fierce onslaughts of his army the small nations to the north had been defeated and subdued, and now this ancient aggressor lay encamped around the battlements of Jerusalem—the last stronghold of liberty. The prophet Isaiah was within the besieged city, and when it appeared that it was about to fall he sent this message to King Hezekiah: "Thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria; he shall not come into this city. . . . For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake."

What happened to the Assyrian army we do not know. It may be that some pestilence fell on it. It may be that some panic overtook it. All that we are told is that "an angel smote it." The mighty army encamped before the city walls became a rabble and withdrew in utter confusion "by the same route by which they came."

Great cities are always heart-stirring to the sensitive soul. Is there any mortal man who can look down from above on a great city and not feel a stir of the heart? You cannot look down at any of the world's vast cities without knowing that the thing that matters

Two Dollars a Year Entered as second-class matter October 14, 1929, at Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published monthly by The Christian Century Press, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. 25 Cents a Copy

is not the buildings—the houses, the shops and factories, the offices and department stores, the churches and historical monuments—but the knowledge that behind all that brick and mortar, steel and reinforced concrete, is an infinite variety of hopes and fears, of tragedy and comedy. "And when he beheld the city of Jerusalem he was moved with compassion." No man can look down on a great city without praying, "God save the people!"

Today, before the ancient cities of Britain, a mighty and victorious army lies encamped from the Land of the Midnight Sun to the Iberian Peninsula. A frustrated enemy has showered death and destruction upon those cities, the like of which has never before been seen. The old City of London is more than the heart of a great empire; it can no more be called exclusively English than Chaucer, Milton or Shakespeare, for they belong to the world. "For centuries to come," says a writer in the *New York Evening Sun,* "Londoners will lead foreign visitors down Fleet Street to the City. 'Here on the right was the Temple.' 'Here was St. Bride's whose spire was called "a madrigal in stone."' 'Here was the medieval Guildhall, here once stood the house of Samuel Johnson.' 'Over there was St. Paul's.' Not too sure of his history, the visitor will ask: 'Let's see—when were these things destroyed? Was it Attila, the Vandals, the Great Fire, the Conqueror, or perhaps Bonaparte, who wrecked them?' 'No, a worse scourge than any of these,' the Londoner will be compelled to answer."

This is not the time or place to dwell upon the horror and senselessness of such indiscriminate bombings. I would rather have you think, not upon the destruction of humble homes and priceless historical monuments, but upon the unconquerable spirit of the thousands of ordinary men and women who are proud to say "I live in London!" "I live in Coventry!" "I live in Birmingham!"

CITIES AND SOULS

A great city writes its history in the testing of human souls—your soul, my soul. The lesson that we can learn from the citizens of London is that falling cities cannot destroy men's faith in God and in the ultimate victory of truth and justice.

In his book, *Britain Speaks,* J. B. Priestley dramatically illustrates this unconquerable faith when he writes: "On Sunday night I watched the fires that for hours had cast a rosy glow over half the sky and turned the upper stories of those whitish London terraces a bright pink. From where I watched, the greatest of the fires was just behind St. Paul's, which was carefully silhouetted in dead black against the red glow of the flames and the orange pink of the smoke. It stood there like a symbol, with its unbroken dome and towering cross, of an enduring civilization of reason and Christian ethics against a red menacing glare of unreason, destruction, savagery."

It is the glory of our Christian religion that even hell itself cannot destroy our faith in those things which we know in our hearts to be true and right. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, yea and forever," declared the Apostle Paul, and through the ages in every time of crisis, tribulation, failure and tragedy men and women have reached out after those things eternal which you and I find symbolized in the Cross of Calvary. History has proved on innumerable occasions that, though ambitious tyrants may destroy men's homes and burn their cities, they can never destroy their faith in a righteous cause. "Truth Prevails" is still the national motto of a prostrated Czechoslovakia, and with God's help the day will come when Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and France will shake off the chains of slavery and arise "with the light of freedom in their eyes."

I know of no more glorious example of the unconquerable spirit of Christian men than the depleted choir of Coventry Cathedral, standing in the midst of the ruined and smoldering nave of that ancient church on Christmas morning, singing their songs of praise to the King of Kings and the Prince of Peace.

THE ROCK OF RELIGION

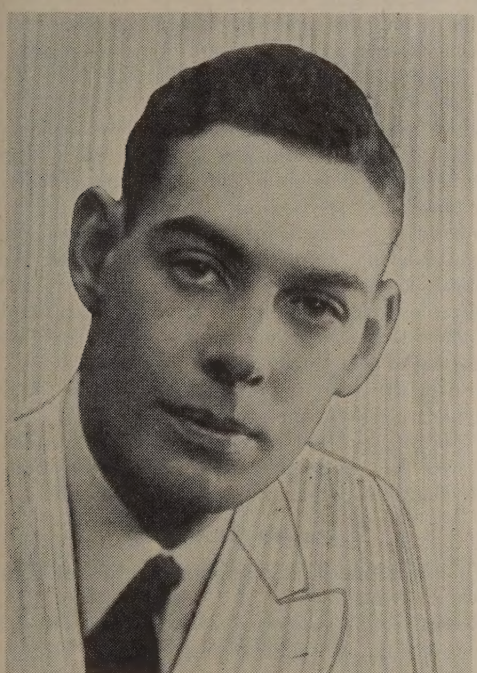
I have often been asked for some explanation of the secret of the amazing courage of the people of Britain and I have always replied that I believe it is due in part to the fact that for centuries the two pillars of English life have been "the home" and "the church." If you stand on any hill and look down into the green valley on some English town or village, you will see rising above the red tiles and gray slates of the roof tops, the stately spires and Norman towers of the churches of Britain. Those stately spires and Norman towers symbolize the faith of a people, a faith without which no nation could have withstood the hell which has descended upon the cities of Britain. Let us in America take note and see to it, before it is too late, that the spiritual foundations of this Union are not built on shifting sands, but upon rock!

"He shall not come into this city. . . . For I will defend this city and save it," declared Jehovah through Isaiah the prophet. If faith in God was the first requirement for the saving of Jerusalem from the invading Assyrians, it is interesting to note that the actual salvation of the city came as an answer to prayer. "Now therefore, O Lord, our God, save us from Sennacherib's hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord," was the simple, almost child-like prayer of King Hezekiah.

Great cities need great souls, and King Hezekiah knew just as we know today that it will not be the ruthlessness of arrogant dictators that will determine the final outcome of the battle; it will be the prayer and service, the faith and the sacrifice, of humble men and women who seek once more to find God. I think it is true to say that in times of peace and security, when everything is going well with us and the sun is shining in our sky, most of us become very lax, not to say careless, about our prayers. At home, we seldom think of thanking God for our daily bread or for having brought us safely through the night. We are very sorry for those poor folk who are going hungry in Europe while we sit down to a hearty meal, but we never stop to bow our heads and say, "Thank you." We take it for

granted that when we go home at the end of the day, our apartment house will still be standing just as we left it in the morning. Not so the people of London! Many a man and woman has crawled out of a dugout to stand in the midst of what was home a few hours ago, but now is a blackened ruin of broken bricks and mortar.

On a bombed street in Coventry a newspaper man came upon two children—big brother and little sister. Everything the bombs had left them was packed on to an old pram and with it they set off. "I want to go home," cried baby sister, her face raised and tears in her eyes. And from her brother—his old little face



S. E. Gerard Priestley

looking straight ahead—came the reply: "We can't go home, Kid. Home's gone with a bomb!"

"Every time I arrive home," writes a London business man, "and see my home still standing, I breathe a prayer of thankfulness to Almighty God."

BACK TO THE CATACOMBS

I do not know how the people of the cities of Britain could carry on if they did not believe in the power of prayer. Over five hundred Methodist churches and a thousand Episcopal church buildings have been destroyed. Forty Congregational churches in the London area have been wrecked. As in the days of old, Christian men and women have been driven down into the catacombs of modern cities to worship God, which is only another instance of how Hitler has put the clock back. Let me read you a prayer that is used every evening about nine o'clock in an air raid shelter where six hundred men and women gather nightly. As I read it, try and imagine yourself one of those six hundred men and women kneeling below the ground in a London air raid shelter:

"Under the shadow of Thy protecting love, O God our Father, we compose ourselves for sleep. Above us and around us are dangers, but Thou art nearer than all dangers, and we are not afraid. Thou art our Shelter and in Thee we find our rest.

"Give Thy divine protection to all the homes of London this night. Be Thou a home to those whose homes have been destroyed. Save all little children from harm and fear. Fold our loved ones in Thy sheltering love. Be with the brave men who are fighting for us on land and sea and in the air, and with those who risk their lives for us in rescue and fire services. Preserve them even in the midst of danger, and save them in every time of temptation. Grant victory to righteousness and truth, we beseech Thee, and a speedy end to this and all wars. Till then, our Father, give to us loyalty, courage, understanding and love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Lord, teach us how to pray," asked the disciples of Jesus, for in prayer can be found one of the secrets of that unconquerable spirit of a great city.

THE CONQUERING SOUL OF MAN

And now I come to my last point and I think that I can best sum it up by quoting the closing words of a brief letter written by a British Tommy to his young wife: "I arrived safely back in camp in spite of the heavy raid, but there is no need to worry, Sweetheart; remember there is always a silver lining behind every dark cloud, and as Jack said the other night, 'we must keep our thumbs up.' You see in the days and weeks and months that lie ahead, although we may have to meet sorrow, hardship and tragedy, there is no reason why these things should master us. You remember that old couplet:

> " 'Two men looked through prison bars,
> The one saw mud, the other saw stars.' "

I know from experience that one of the reasons why Hitler has not broken the morale of London is because the Londoner never indulges in self-pity and he is a born optimist. That simple letter is an attempt on the part of a British Tommy to tell his wife to have courage and to remember that trouble and loneliness need not crush her. It says that the soul of a man or woman is greater than external conditions. The poet has put it in these words:

> I will not make of circumstance my jailer and my fate,
> I will step forth to victory, through every failure's gate.

We have a phrase which we use somewhat loosely; we say "under the circumstances" when we mean "in the circumstances." No man or woman ought to be "under the circumstances" of his life, but over them, and by God's help he can achieve this triumph.

On the walls of Chester Cathedral is an inscription, part of which reads:

> Give me a mind that is not bored,
> That does not whimper, whine or sigh,
> Don't let me worry overmuch
> About the fussy thing called I.

Then the inscription proceeds:

> Give me a sense of humor, Lord,
> To get some happiness from life
> And pass it on to other folk.

SERVING IN A GREAT CAUSE

It is these little attitudes to life that make up the unconquerable spirit of a great city. May we who are privileged to say "I live in New York!" "I live in Boston!" "I live in Chicago!" learn from and profit by the faith and prayers and sacrifices of the citizens of Coventry, of Birmingham and London. When we get home, let us sit down or kneel down in some quiet place, and, in this dark period of national testing, think of ancient cities, think of modern cities that are now the center of a new battle between freedom and slavery, and then may we have the faith and the courage to pray: "God give me willingness of soul to serve Thee in Thy great cause and to do my part to serve and help my fellow men."

If you say that, and millions more say it, there will be no doubt for America and the world as to who will win the victory. There will be no doom for the cities of Britain, no blackout for the cities of America. "The rulers of the world go by in purple and in gold; they rise, they flourish and they die, and so the tale is told." One Kingdom only is divine and that is open to all men of every race and color; its banner triumphs still, its King is a servant and its sign a cross on a hill. Its capital is a city which hath foundations. "Thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, he shall not come into this city. For I will defend this city and save it for my own sake."

Faces or Things?

EVERY LIFE will be tested finally by this appraisal—does it see faces, or only things?

Some business men see nothing but things—price lists, profits, sales resistance; while other business men see faces—the faces of those who work for them, and the faces of those who have no work.

Some statesmen see nothing but things—battleships, voting booths, newspaper headlines. Other statesmen see faces—the faces of the poor, the faces of little children, the myriad faces of those slain in war.

Some preachers see nothing but things—church buildings, year books, card catalogues. Other preachers see faces—faces wistful and sin-scarred, faces lonely yet brave.

The Master saw nothing but faces—nothing on earth but faces, nothing in heaven but faces, nothing in hell but faces.

GEORGE A. BUTTRICK.

HUMAN BEINGS are not machines. They will not operate efficiently on fuel and physical attentions alone. Human beings cannot live happily or effectively unless, consciously or unconsciously, they are building a shrine in which, item by item, they collect and cherish the ideas and ideals in which they have faith.

ROBERT G. SPROUL.

The Faith That Undergirds Life

BY PHILIP ALLEN SWARTZ

I live by faith in the son of God. Galatians 2:20.

THE Christian churches of the world are facing the most difficult situation they have ever known. Europe is at war. Asia has been at war for more than three years. Africa is the theater of fierce desert fighting. Effective faith in action can alone keep the Americas from plunging into war's abyss, on the brink of which we are now teetering. This places a heavier load on every Christian than we are prepared to bear. If ever men needed to utter the disciples' prayer, "Lord, increase our faith," it is now.

Much that our Christian forebears have been standing for through the centuries is threatened by aggressive political philosophies and public moral lethargy. Not since the early centuries have the churches encountered such tremendous odds. Then the vast power of the Roman empire challenged faith. Now a new political dogmatism seeks to impose upon free men a totalitarian concept of life. In some nations struggling for power the faith of the church is scorned and flouted by those who want a new order.

Let us, therefore, try to understand better the faith that undergirds life, the possession of which is so essential for progress and so vital for our own spiritual welfare. We are deeply concerned with the effects of faith upon both personality and community life.

FAITH AND PERSONALITY

First of all, faith must be central in life for superior personality.

Recent years have given added emphasis to the value of personality. We admire those who are capable of marked achievement. Today people of all lands are craving the leadership of strong personalities. We feel that if only we had some leaders great and wise enough our problems would be solved. That point of view has made some of us neglect tasks at our own doors. Protracted reliance upon someone else inevitably results in deterioration of our own personalities. That may be the explanation why there seem to be today so many split personalities. Many are constantly trying to serve both God and mammon.

This is the basic cause of war. We crave power for itself. We rely on reason for itself. As a result we miss the one central element for the development of personality. This is not reason. It is not power. It is faith. St. Paul knew what it was when he wrote, "I live by faith in the Son of God." But our generation relies rather on reason and power. Human reason fails to become powerful. Power refuses to become reasonable. Men violate the laws of nations and the laws of God. Armed forces clash. Reason is swept away. Millions of people suffer agony. Hundreds of young men and women face lifelong unhappiness. Others by the hundreds go bravely to their death. We Christians stand by or participate in this tragic pageant of life.

Ve wish that the wise might become powerful. We ope that someday the powerful may become good. aith alone can bring these things to pass.

OUR VAUNTED CIVILIZATION

Picture our civilization. Man's power has expanded enormous strides during the past three generations. century ago power was obtained largely from falling ater which performed most of the heavy work not one by man or beast. Steam was just being harnessed. lectricity was not yet captured. The scientific era as beginning. Now we have entered a new power e. But we may well question whether all this power as added much to human happiness. Civilization looks ore like a gorilla than a man. There is a great body ith terrible arms that holds over half the men, women id children of the world the fear of starvation and ntinuous suffering from hunger. Civilization's brute rength crushes with cruel rapacity the works of auty—the museums, universities, libraries, cathedrals id churches. Civilization almost overnight loses its andeur and becomes a beast.

This gorilla-like civilization has too small a cranial pacity for the enormous task of running an orderly, ee and prosperous society. Humanity has too little ain, insufficient intelligence. Whatever may be the ory of man's nature as an individual, his conduct in e mass is often like that of the beast of the jungle.

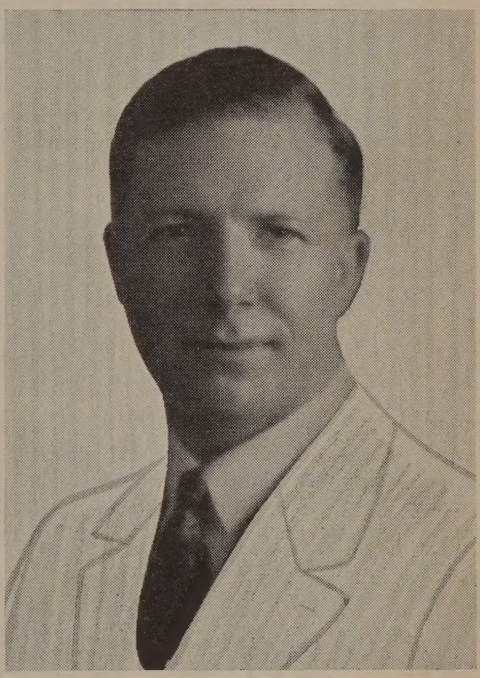
From early times many men have sought to rise above e level of the brute. Now whole communities respond reason, which takes the experience of the past and plies its light to daily needs. Even when reason is lded to physical power it is not enough for mankind. eason is prudent, self-protective, self-seeking. Life its best dimensions requires more than that. Now id then men have gone beyond the reasonable. They ve explored the unknown. They have attempted the npossible. They have lived, given all and died for an eal. They have centered everything on one thought. his all embracing desire is the thought of God. For ch souls God is the power above all others. God is e truth beyond man's knowledge. He is the force om which life springs. He is the eternal good. His irit permeates the universe and stirs in the heart of an.

To grasp this thought of God in control of personal fe and striving through men dedicated to him to con-ol all of life is a conception that requires more than ason. To have such a conception of the possibilities personality we must have faith. We too need to ve by faith in the Son of God.

FAITH CENTRAL IN PERSONALITY

What then is this faith that may be central in per-nality? Faith is the power that peers into the dark. goes beyond science. Science records the past ob-rvations of men in relation to the material order. aith lives through history. History records the past fe of men in relation to one another. Faith is the oneering, the adventuring quality that opens up new eas. Faith is the mainspring of effort in untried ojects. Faith is the essential characteristic of progress. It is the unique and vital element of religion. Religion without faith would not exist. Science without faith would be blind experiment. Faith stimulates the prophet to apply fearlessly ideal principles to present issues. Faith keeps the laboratory investigator pursuing his quest for new facts. "I believe" is the one affirmation that silences the man who says "I know."

To grow from trusting childhood to full mental maturity we require faith. To control all the powers which man possesses we must rely on faith. To obtain the best from life we must depend on faith. To enjoy the fruits of friendship we must cultivate faith. To render one's greatest contribution to this day and



PHILIP ALLEN SWARTZ

age, let us diligently develop our faith. To live life in its largest dimensions, let us resolve to explore with full vigor the outer reaches of faith. To overcome the forces of despair, of sorrow, of disappointment, of failure and of death, we have no other course but to fall back on faith.

When we respond to these reasons for making faith central in our own personalities, we shall find that faith undergirds our lives in many ways. Faith undergirds life with courage that faces troubles with stout-hearted calm. The experiment of the laboratory and the argument of the classroom do not give birth to persistence in the face of trials. That quality is an achievement of faith. Men need faith in themselves, in their friends, in the ideals to which they have given themselves, in the powers without ourselves that work for righteousness. This is what it means to live by faith in the Son of God. This faith is strong to endure and brave in times of stress.

Faith undergirds life with patience. Difficult as it is to achieve and to keep everlastingly trying in the

presence of discouragements, it is much harder to stand by and watch. Waiting is the most difficult business in the world. Young fathers and mothers know that. Doctors know that. Inventors and authors know it. Great men of faith have known how to work and how to wait. They remember always that God is their partner and that he brings forth his purposes in good season. Whenever enough Christians learn this, there will be a new spirit of faith in the church. Religious enthusiasts and social reformers will seek less power in controversy with men, and will develop more sustaining power in communion and cooperation with God.

TOWARD COMMUNION WITH GOD

Faith, moreover, will undergird life with spiritual values. Faith is the quality that by trustful self-giving makes opportunities for friendship. Because faith trusts others, men of faith win the confidence of strangers. Faith ventures into ways of service essential to a rich and full life. Faith stimulates self-giving for altruistic goals. It brushes away trivialities that obscure eternal realities. It serves as a refreshing breeze to sweep away the mists from the landscape of truth. Faith penetrates beyond the accepted modes of society to lay hold of undiscovered treasures for the enrichment of all. Faith is like a swiftly flowing stream that carries man's frail craft of life through the dark gorges of sorrow and bereavement to the pleasant valleys of peace of heart.

Faith in the last analysis does more than undergird life with courage, patience and spiritual values. Faith establishes a man's life in direct, continuing communion with God. Read the record of history for the thrilling stories of men whose lives have been changed by faith, like Augustine and St. Francis of Assisi; like the wealthy young adventurer, Francis Xavier, and the stolid farmer, Oliver Cromwell; like the writer, Sir Walter Scott, and the slaveship captain, John Newton. The sense of partnership with God finally sustained them all in feats of prodigious achievement and service to the human race.

FAITH AND THE FUTURE

This faith in God will uphold us in the duties of the day and in the development of our destiny. Such faith in God is indispensable in planning the future. Without faith we shall fail to deserve much of the good the future has in store for us. Most men have only a speaking acquaintance with such faith. I plead with you that this faith may become an intimate reality for us all. If there is any danger that lurks undetected and against which few of us have thrown up effective defenses, it is the danger of double standards of life. For most of us unwittingly, and for many of us unwillingly, there is a religious standard of life and a practical standard of life between which our natures are divided.

In certain moments and in certain moods we do what at other times we wish we had never done. "For the good that I would that I do not, and the evil that I would not that I do." We know well that no man can serve two masters, but that is what we often find ourselves trying to do. The psychologists will say tha such personalities are not adequately integrated. Few of us actually display the characteristics of a Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde, but nonetheless the elements of bifurcated personality are latent in us and all too often strug gle for the control of our lives. Only faith in God ca serve as the great center for the organization of ou best selves, for the development of superior personali ties.

Let us the more diligently cultivate faith in God Faith may become such a reality to you as it was t Paul. He acknowledged the complete crucifixion of hi old life as a result of his faith in Jesus Christ. His new life he aptly described as a life "hid with Christ i God." The faith that undergirds life will thus unit us with God, so that we shall grow in Christlike char acter through all the years. The world is waiting fo a generation of men who will have faith to live in thi close bond with God. Let us today seek anew so t "live by faith in the Son of God."

FAITH IN COMMUNITY LIFE

Just as faith must be central in life for the develop ment of superior personality, it must be in control o community life to give the new security.

When faith is in control of community life, rapi strides forward mark new milestones in the progres of humanity toward the Kingdom of God. It wa faith that reinforced the winds that propelled the May flower to these shores. It was faith that made Joh Wheelright turn from the intolerant Massachusett Bay Colony to found Exeter in New Hampshire. I was faith that sent brave men to Rhode Island wit Roger Williams, and others to Philadelphia with Wil liam Penn and others to Concord with Peter Bulkeley It was faith that opened the western reserve and wo the Oregon country. It will be faith that will inspir the strong men of today to shake off fear, sloth an self-seeking to build the better country for our de scendants.

More important than faith in the future good an in a finer estate for man is the faith that means im mediate salvation from a man's lower nature whic preys on the community; faith that safeguards a ma in the face of moral and spiritual disintegration. On Sunday after church service I found a young woma waiting to see me. She poured out a story of grief an repentance for an age-old sin. With candor I ex plained how God forgives and how faith in Chris would give her courage to live a new life. Severa weeks passed before I saw her again. With a reques that I read, she handed me a note which she had writ ten to her mother. With a glance I saw that it wa a farewell message saying something about takin poison and ending it all. I asked, "What made yo realize the wrong of such an act?" "After I had fin ished writing the letter," she replied, "a strange com pulsion came over me. I remembered what faith i Christ's foregiveness would do for one who believed I want to give faith a chance to change my life." Sh began bravely all over again.

Faith will help a person do just that. Faith is th best starting point on the journey of life. The way o

ith is the best chart. The goal of faith is the best estiny.

Faith serves not only to assure the development of ersonality and to afford salvation from besetting sins; ith also changes the social atmosphere of whole com-unities. When faith goes the whole organism of ommunity life collapses. A man's hand is turned gainst his neighbor. Credit is denied everyone. The heels of industry and the halls of commerce are illed. To those who complain about the dull times which we have been living in recent years it is not ften said: "Come back to church. You need the peace f mind and the clear-eyed vision of life that comes hen a man has faith in God."

Why not try some such reply the next time a person mplains about taxes, about government interference, bout the weaknesses of our democratic system? I ap-reciate the fact that many have real grievances about ings as they are, but let us have more men who will row their weight into the collars rather than spend ll their time tugging at the backstraps. Christian ith put to work has already performed modern mir-cles in some communities. It is high time that we ould extend its influence in our common life. Every ommunity in this nation needs a continuous applica-on of the influence of Christian faith.

CHRISTIANITY MOLDS COMMUNITY LIFE

Religious institutions help to make our cities and wns good places in which to live. There would be marked exodus from many a place if there should be wave of church failures. The beneficent influence of hristianity stands out in marked contrast to condi-ons in non-Christian lands.

The night before I left China I heard the most amaz-g account of Christian heroism. Out in the western rovince of China called Kansu, thirty days on horse-ack from the end of the railroad, there was a mis-onary named Tornvall. Although he administered mple medical remedies to suffering people he would ot have been admitted to the American Medical As-ciation, because he had not studied in an accredited hool. Nevertheless he brought great relief to many ling Chinese.

One day Mr. Tornvall entered the village of Ping iang. He was immediately seized by the officers of e town and hauled before the village elders. In no ncertain terms they informed him of their displeasure. hey called him "a foreign devil" and condemned him a wizard. They put him in a cage near the market lace. The cell was too low for him to stand erect and o narrow for him to lie down. He had to remain ere subject to the heat of the noonday sun and to the ill cold of the nights of that high altitude. All day ng the people gathered round. He tried to explain at he had come to help and not to harm them. They stened curiously and went their way.

Presently, after three days had passed and he still splayed the same kindly nature and spoke the same range words of God's love for all men, the village ders again brought him before their court. This time ey were in no mood for half-way measures. They were discussing whether to use the broadsword, the rope or a firing squad to put this pestiferous fellow out of the way. Just then there called out in shrill tones the voice of a woman. From the back of the room an old lady hobbled forward on her bound feet, clutching with weazened hand the long staff on which she leaned. Shaking her bony finger at the head man of the village, she cried out: "This man is no wizard. He is a good man. He does not want to harm us. He has already helped me. You have all known that I have had pain in my eyes. No one of you seemed to care. He told me what to do and after using the common salt solution I am so much better. You have been wondering how he kept so strong and well. You have said that he had supernatural powers to have such strength without food and drink. It is I who have brought him the rice and tea at night. He is a good man. You shall not touch a single hair of his head. You must let him go!"

LIVING AND DYING BY FAITH

That woman saved Mr. Tornvall's life. The elders made him leave the city at once. He went over the countryside doing all sorts of works of mercy and preaching the gospel of the love of God and the message of the life of Christ. People heard of him and gained confidence in him. At last his fame as teacher and healer reached Ping Liang. The village elders in council decided to invite him to return. Messengers were sent to persuade him to come back. They promised to give him the best brick building in town if only he would come back and teach the people and care for their sickness. He went back, but not for many years. Only a few years ago soldiers in Sianfu captured him and killed him. He gave his labor and his life, but not in vain. Many of the cities and towns of Kansu have had the message of Christian faith because he and others like him lived by faith in God.

Just as Christian faith changed the civilization of the Angles and the Saxons in ancient times, and the way of life of the Hawaiians and Fijiians in recent times, and is bringing a new outlook to Hindus, Zulus and all the races of men today, it will change the life of any community. Best of all, it provides that trust in God and faith in mankind that is the world's chief security.

This faith is the great need of this city and of this nation. It is the one answer to a warring world which some day must live at peace.

I HAVE every reason to be thankful for the influence that surrounded me when I was young. I was brought up in a home, typical of thousands of homes in England, in which the Bible has a prominent place. All of us, even in our large families as we grew up, were brought face to face with the claims of Christ as Lord and Savior.

With many faltering steps and often failing completely to be a good advertisement for Christianity, yet I can truly say that to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, resting on his promises, is the greatest thing in life.

SIR THOMAS W. H. INSKIP.

God in the Darkness

By Arnold Hilmar Lowe

The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. Proverbs 20:27.

DURING the past weeks I have been haunted by one of the most magnificent words in the Old Testament, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." Here is a strange and almost fantastic picture of God. Here is God walking in the shadows, groping in the dark, holding in his hand a candle, and this candle is the spirit of man. For you and me the implications of this picture are terrific.

The fundamental problem of our time is to help men retain or regain an unfailing hope, that in the end all will be well. When the world is falling apart, and the lights are going out on all the shores of all the seas, man, more than at any other time, needs faith and hope. But it is this very hope that seems to be passing from us, and our faith in everlasting truth and in the eternal goodness of God is crumbling.

From my African experiences, I remember coming upon a countryside that was bereft of every vestige of life. The hot winds from the north had blown across the stretch of land for weeks on end. The blight of death was upon everything. Even the wells giving the last sustenance of life had dried up. Something like this is happening to us today. The hot winds of angry words and wicked deeds are blowing across the vast stretches of men's thoughts and faith, and the blight of death is upon them. Now that men are seeing evil in a concentrated form, they are beginning to despair of man, of Christ, of God.

I

We despair of man, for man is standing in the shadows. Nothing can be added to what has been said about man's capacity for evil. He has broken every commandment in the Decalogue. He has committed crimes we did not even dream man could commit. He has defied every law of decency and barricaded every road that leads to sanity and moral health and peace. He stands before us unmasked, a caricature of what God intended him to be. Yes, man stands in the shadows, and yet we must have faith in him. We must believe in him. We must believe in him because God believes in him. God so loved man that he sent his only begotten Son. God so trusted man that he said, "I will make you fishers of men." So highly did he regard him that he commanded him to go into all the world and teach the nations. And so earnestly did he yearn for him that he pleaded, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Man who destroys must also build again. Man who now hates, must some day love again. Man who now plants so much sorrow, must some day plant again the seeds of joy and gladness and good will. Man who now breaks a million hearts, must some day heal the hearts and pour balm into the wounds that he has made. Man must do that—and he will do that.

But how? How are men to find their way out of this darkness into which they have slipped? God means to lead them out and back by holding aloft a candle, and this candle is your spirit and mine; your faith and my faith. There is no other way!

Here is this darkness of sin, deeper than the darkness of the night. Here is this supercilious indifference to truth and righteousness. Here are the acids of irreligion eating into the very heart and substance of men's convictions; and only as some of us stubbornly hold on, feeding the flame of faith within ourselves and sheltering this flame from the storms about us, can others find their way out of the darkness into the light.

Here is this darkness of sorrow. Sorrow is like the sea—it washes upon every shore; and when it comes, lives go to pieces, tomorrow looks foreboding, energies lag, work becomes drudgery. Into this darkness steps God holding aloft his candle. Is it not man who changes someone's sorrow into joy; who makes him see the rainbow through the rain; who brings him to the sustaining conviction that where there is a twilight there must also be a dawn; that where the sun sets the sun must also rise?

Here is this darkness of war, and what a darkness it is! It is a darkness of prejudice and hatred and furious destruction. Well, at a time when all the world is going mad, God comes into the darkness holding aloft his candle. Some men there are, and some men there must be, who will not succumb. Whatever life may bring their words and their hearts will remain free from intolerance, insinuations and hatred.

My friends, you and I must never forget that, for many, the only way to God is our inoffensive goodness, our inherent kindness. The only light by which some can walk is the light in us.

II

Men despair of Christ, for Christ stands in the shadows. It seems as if all the world has forgotten him—and where Christ is forgotten, what else can there be but darkness? Now into this darkness steps God, bringing his candle—the spirit of man. Some of us cannot let go of the thought that there is no hope of redemption for this world except as we find it in Christ. Some of us know that there is no name given unto men whereby they must be saved, save the name of Jesus Christ. The world needs redemption desperately. Nothing else will suffice. No half-way measure will lift this world of ours out of the pit.

Of late we have become afraid of this word "salvation." But why should we be, in view of our desperate need of it? Does not scientific medicine seek to save us from disease? Do not schools exist to free us from ignorance? Do we not foster philanthropies because we need to be saved from poverty? There is no escaping the fact. So the gospel of Christ has always taught, so it teaches today, and so some of us still believe. We are in such great need that we are willing to grasp at a straw. But why, oh why, grasp at a straw when Christ is available?

In the year 1666, the city of London was destroyed by the great fire. Two-thirds of the city was reduced

o ashes. Thirteen thousand houses were destroyed and over two hundred thousand of the city's inhabitants were made homeless. The valiant people of London ought to quench that fire with half-filled buckets. It was like sweeping back the ocean with a broom. In our day thousands upon thousands of incendiary bombs have been unloosed upon this same city. On almost every housetop stand fire wardens, and when the sirens scream the highly mechanized units speed to the rescue. Today the city of London still stands, bruised, scarred and charred, but she still stands. And here we are in a world that is burning up, the flames reaching the agonizing heart of God, and we are trying to put out the

ARNOLD HILMAR LOWE

fire with half-filled buckets; for what else are our little schemes, our economic readjustments, our balances of power, our little moral homilies? To such we stoop. To such we resort when we might have Christ. Christ is the healing of the nations, and him we need, and short of him nothing in all the world will suffice.

Those of us who believe this, are God's candles by whose lights men will find their way out of the darkness to find this Christ.

III

Men despair of God, for he too stands in the shadows. The most potent argument against God and against the love of God is human suffering. Whenever man is led through the valley of the shadow, the first question he asks is, "How can God do this to me?" And we are standing in the valley of the shadows—we and millions of others—and once more we are questioning not only the wisdom but the very goodness of God. The faith of many men is suffering shipwreck. The new theories and schemes of mighty men are frightening us. We are afraid that they may take away what our fathers built, and rob us of that freedom for which many became heroes and some became martyrs. They frighten us with their words, their staccatos of terror, their accents of threats.

Yes, God stands in the shadows—but do you not see? He is holding aloft a candle!—the spirit of man, that spirit in some of us who still believe that God is greater than any man. Do the schemes of men frighten us—then let us remember that

> Our little systems have their day,
> They have their day and cease to be,
> But thou, O Lord, art more than they.

The dreams of God are older than the dreams of man. The dreams and purposes of God will march on to consummation long after the purposes of man will have become dust and ashes, mere references in neglected textbooks on history.

Are we frightened by the hates of men which spread like hot lava over our lives? Then let us remember that the love of God is not some pious embroidery with which to decorate our pious hearts. No, the love of God is something real and tremendous. It sees; it understands; it empowers; it transforms; it forgives; it redeems. And those of us who have walked under God's benediction, and sought him out in the night watches, know that nothing however evil, however hurtful, can separate us from that love. With the Apostle Paul we say: "Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us, for we are persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to some, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus."

Are we frightened by the terrifying words of men? Do they make our little universe tremble? Do they send panic into our souls? Do they give us the feeling of insecurity? Well, then, let us remember that long after the words of men will have been silenced by inexorable time, God will still speak.

You recall this sentence from one of the majestic Psalms: "He uttered His voice and the earth trembled." Of whom was this said? Of some human titan straddling the world with his sinister genius? No, it was said of God who stood in the shadows. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." What dignity, what unspeakable dignity God grants us in making our faith the light that floods this dark world with hope! What unspeakable grace he has granted us in making our faith the lighted highway along which our brother men may go once more to the task of building and healing and loving. What incomparable favor to make our hearts the open roads that will lead others to our Christ! Aye, to make our hearts the lighted candles which God carries into the darkness so that men may see again. And if your candle is snuffed out, the road will be that much darker.

Did Jesus Mean It?

By Samuel W. Marble

He saith unto them, but whom say ye that I am? Matthew 16:15.

THE war has opened the eyes of the world to a host of truths new and alarming. Multitudes of people have discovered with amazement the folly of their boasted convictions and the futility of their ardent hopes. But the fact of outstanding significance is the one set forth by the war supporters, establishing beyond possibility of question the fact that Jesus was a joker.

Until recently we were still deceived by his self-imposed divinity. We hailed him as Master, Savior, Redeemer; we called him "the greatest of teachers, our Lord." Christian statesmen, college presidents, world-famous psychiatrists and psychologists were telling us that in his gospel lay the solution for all the problems of men.

Now the scales have fallen from our eyes; instructed by the war supporters we are seeing a little more clearly. The mantle of divinity this "Jesus" wrought about himself has begun to grow tattered and threadbare. Beholding, we are disillusioned, and the question he put to his disciples repeats itself in our minds: "But whom say ye that I am?" Well, you know something about him. You know what he did. You know what he taught. Who was he, anyhow? "But whom say ye that I am?"

VISIONARY OR JOKER?

His own hearers told him, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil." Did they speak the truth? Was he a sorcerer, a wild-eyed fakir? Or was he a harmless visionary? Or was he a mighty superman, encouraging us to hope boundlessly, labor tremendously and die heroically in the support of his teachings—one who, when the greatest crisis of history came and the world built its hopes on his precepts, straightway gathered those hopes in his fist and hurled them in ruin upon his followers?

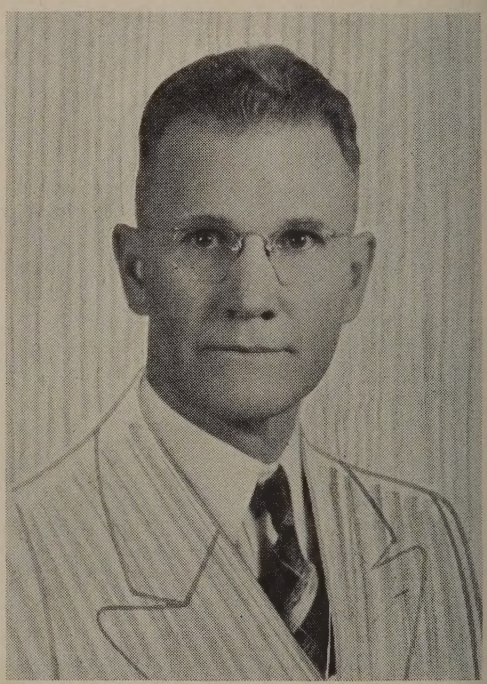
No, he was none of these. He was only a joker of colossal genius, universally misunderstood, whose supremely keen sarcasm has been veiled for nineteen centuries. In peacetime we can take him seriously. But in wartime his precepts stand out for what they are—jokes!

At last the true character of his teachings has been revealed. No longer may Christian ministers tell us that his words should be taken seriously. No longer may churches declare that his spirit and life should be our guide. Fools and cowards are they who still hold this conception. For this world is a world of war, a world where right can be upheld only by the sword.

The law says, "Do no murder." But it recognizes that oftentimes murder and patriotism are one, and it rewards murderers with honor. Loyal men must sometimes wade knee-deep in their brothers' blood, else were they not loyal. Truly, murder brings justice! Hatred, brutality and lies are the ultimate basis of peace! Sooner or later everything depends on force! Does a man dare dispute it? Muzzle the wretch! He's a traitor! Everybody knows that might makes right and that this world is a world of war.

'THE WARRIOR OF NAZARETH'

Jesus himself was a warrior, we are told. Didn't he once take a whip of cords and drive the grafters out of the temple? Therefore it is clear that were he here today, he would instantly approve of bombs, machine guns and poison gas; he would approve the obliteration of cities, the bombing of women and children to atoms.



Samuel W. Marble

To be sure he said: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that ye resist not evil. But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Saying this, however, he was sarcastic. In reality he meant, "Kill him! Blast him into kingdom come." See? the truth is perfectly simple, once you get the proper idea of Jesus.

And now hear this warrior of Nazareth saying, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Oh, the superb irony of it! Can you find anywhere more penetrating or keener sarcasm? And again: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Such stinging ridicule, such consummate mockery, such acrimonious hypocrisy is without a parallel in literature.

Again: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and

there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." On the surface Jesus appears to say that any suggestion of hate or spite or strife makes one unacceptable in the eyes of God. To be approved of God, all ill will, all hatred of every kind must be entirely eliminated from the heart, and we must be able to pray sincerely, "Forgive us as we forgive." But is this his real meaning?

OBEY MEN RATHER THAN GOD

Of course not! The exact opposite is true. Jesus really meant that we must obey men rather than God, and that men with strongest hate are most acceptable. What! Shall I hold a peace council with some criminal about some dastardly crime he has committed? Hold a peace council about crime? Never! Rather, crush him! Such matters are not settled by peace conferences. At least, so say our war supporters, and therefore, so says God! Yea verily, ever and for all men let our war supporters be the men of truth, and let the Son of God be a joker.

"Fear God," said a great war advocate, "and take your own part." But what is the Christian teaching? "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves . . . vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."

O irony supreme! Ah Jesus, Jesus! Too keen for human minds till now has been this matchless sarcasm. Men, blind fools, have lost the force of your words and found only literal teaching. But at last we understand you. At last we see your mockery, your leering jest in commanding us, "Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

Where in history, where in biography, where in fiction can we find such illimitable skill in ironic sword-thrusts as was exhibited by this jesting Jesus? Where can we find such a master of pitiless, stinging sarcasm as this leering Nazarene? His veiled contempt, his subtle ridicule, and his caustic, covert mockery render his Sermon on the Mount the supreme sarcastic joke of the ages.

A MESSIAH FOR THE TIMES

This, then, is the real Jesus as the war supporters set him before us. This is the self-styled "Son of God," the boasted "Savior," the pretended "Messiah," who was understood to declare himself immortal and divine. Behold him, stripped of his mimic divinity, a mere crafty pedagogue; a bumptious lawyer; a common Galilean pauper, elevated solely by his genius for irony; standing among the jokers of history, supreme.

. . .

And yet, in spite of all the war supporters say, in spite of persecutions, accusations, hatreds and martyrdoms that may result—in spite of it all, who was he? The question will not down. Who was he? Shall we listen to him? Was he the Son of God? Shall we believe him? In varying forms his question keeps repeating itself in our minds—a strange spiritual presence confronts us—"But whom say *ye* that I am?"

The Fountain of Freedom

By Franklin D. Elmer, Jr.

If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. John 8:31, 32.

THESE are days when we need to do plenty of straight thinking about the fundamentals of living. One sure way of thinking straight is to take some of the familiar, time-tested sentences from Scripture and give them fresh interpretation. So this morning I take you to one of the best known, but perhaps least understood, verses of the New Testament: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Man is by nature a seeker. He is at his best when he is seeking with all his heart and mind for something for which he yearns with all his heart and mind. Animals seek for food and comfort and shelter. But man learned long ago that he does not live by bread alone. To find food and comfort and shelter is not enough for him. They do not satisfy. Man must have things that belong to an unseen world, he must search for things that are beyond the material.

One thing for which man has searched consistently and persistently is freedom. We cannot understand history apart from this long and arduous quest. There is that in man which keeps him searching for what he calls freedom, even though he knows that the freedom he desires belongs to a spiritual world which he cannot fully understand.

Where can freedom be found? When Ponce de Leon wandered about the Caribbean Islands in the days of early Spanish discovery he heard rumors that in a land to the north, a land called Bimini, there was a fountain of perpetual youth. So Ponce de Leon went looking for Bimini, feeling sure that he would find there what he sought. But what of freedom—in what realm of life is the fountain of freedom to be found?

There have been many suggestions with regard to this. Some have said that freedom is to be found in the realm of force, that freedom comes only through conquest. There are many advocates of this opinion in our world today. "We cannot have freedom," they say, "except through the offices of force." But they have not yet found it through the use of force. We do not need to take that as simply a personal opinion. Let one of the foremost exponents of this method speak for himself. Listen to these words from Napoleon: "Do you know what amazes me more than anything else in the world? The impotence of force to organize anything. There are only two powers in the world—the spirit and the sword. In the long run the sword will always be conquered by the spirit." Freedom, then, cannot be found in the realm of force. Force itself can be conquered by something else.

Others have said that freedom comes through isola-

tion, that it is a geographical thing. And so we have nations in our world ringed with steel, and shut apart by trade barriers, in an effort to keep themselves isolated from those who would disturb their freedom. This doctrine of freedom through isolation is peculiarly American. There are many in this land who think that because we are separated from the rest of the world by thousands of miles of ocean, we are particularly blessed with the prerequisites of freedom. But even as they proclaim their theories of isolation, Americans are reflecting all the hatreds and bitterness and stupidity of a world at war. Geography does not make us free.

There is another realm in which the search for freedom has been avidly pursued in our day. It is the realm of truth. We have taken a phrase of Scripture as our text and have grown wild with hope as we have sought for freedom through truth. "Know the truth and the truth shall make you free"—we have made this a shibboleth for the twentieth century.

We have inscribed these words in iron over the gates of universities, we have put them in stone over the doors of libraries, we have used them with an ardor approaching piety in the dedicating of commercial laboratories. "Know the truth," we have cried, "and the truth shall make you free." Hillaire Belloc has expressed this faith with gratifying vividness in a little verse:

> The path of life is hard and rough
> Only because we do not know enough.
> When science has discovered something more
> We shall be happier than we were before.

The search for freedom through truth has brought some wonderful results—no doubt about it. We need not mention the progress in communication and transportation, and the thousand and one gadgets which have made life easier. But we must admit that our search for the fountain of freedom in the realm of truth has been disillusioning. There are a good many college diplomas on the walls of cells in Sing Sing; and the bomb that shrieks as it falls, and scares people half to death before it finally kills them, is the product of the scientifically trained mind. Even psychology, which has taught us to understand one another better, has enabled us to fool one another more cleverly with super-super advertising. Altogether our search for freedom through truth hasn't changed the balance of good and evil very much.

What is our difficulty? Was Jesus wrong in this statement? The difficulty is very simple. Jesus did not say what we have thought he said. He did not say, "know the truth and the truth shall make you free." He said something very different: "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." In other words, there is an inner condition which must precede this gaining of freedom-giving truth.

This matter of an inner attitude preceding proper results is quite consistent with all of Jesus' teaching. The Sermon on the Mount begins with a long series of illustrations of this. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Be pure in heart, develop that inner purity, and you will see God. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Hunger and thirst after righteousness, develop a great desire for these things, and your hunger shall be satisfied. The inner condition comes first. So with this text: If ye abide in my word, if you do the things I say, believe as I have believed, follow my example, live as I have lived, then are ye truly my disciples and the result will be that you will know the truth and the truth shall make you free. With our American penchant for brevity we have left out the most important part of this sentence. The real fountain of freedom described here is not in truth, but in the living spirit of Jesus Christ.

I

There are a number of implications in this text that we must consider. First: *It makes a difference where we begin.* If we want the proper results we must begin in the proper place with the right inner attitudes.

Let us illustrate this by considering our search for brotherhood. We Christians believe ardently in brotherhood. We want it to become a reality in our world. But how shall we get it?

We have felt that if world trade were built up, if economic ties around the world should become sufficiently strong, the day of brotherhood would be hastened. But it hasn't worked that way. Begin with an economic motive, with a quest for profits, and what do you get? You get the Spaniards coming into the Caribbean Islands and slaughtering the native Caribs and Arawaks. And in our time you get the subjection of Holland and Belgium; you get India bled of a billion dollars a year in profits for a great empire. The result is not brotherhood.

We have also felt that if political unity could be developed in the world, that too would further brotherhood. We held high hopes, in this regard, for the League of Nations. But if you start to conquer the world with the motive of political unification, what do you get? First of all, you get the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The charge they hurled against him was that "he stirreth up the people." Rome, with all the might of world empire, did not dare let her supremacy be challenged. In our time you get a dozen great nations feeling that their own political systems and prestige are the most essential things in the world, and that if there is to be any world conflict they must win the victory. There is little hope for the world, they feel, if their form of political rule does not triumph. The result of all this is not brotherhood.

But start with Christian motives; begin with the attitude of brotherhood, with a faith that all men are children of one God, then you get something different. You find Paul crossing lines of race and language and culture and taking to the Gentiles the message of the good news of Jesus Christ. And in our time you have missionaries going to the far ends of the earth, not for profit or political power, but to develop understanding and good will. You get representatives of nearly seventy nations, some from Germany and England, some from China and Japan, gathering in Madras to sit

gether at the feet of Jesus Christ. And you have them rmulating such an expression of the oneness of hu-anity as this: "Our nations are at war with one nother; but we know ourselves brethren in Christ's urch. Our people increase in suspicion and fear of ne another; but we are learning to trust one another. ur governments build instruments of mutual destruc-on; we join in united action for the reconciliation of manity." Thus you get brotherhood, with its hope r the world. "If ye abide in my word—ye shall know e truth and the truth shall make you free." It makes difference, you see, where you begin.

FRANKLIN D. ELMER, JR.

II

A second implication in this text is of equal signifi-nce. It is that *freedom comes through truth discov-ed in living experience.* "If ye live as I have lived ye all know the truth and the truth shall make you ee."

In our quest for truth we have too often deemed it fficient to look into the windows without living in e house. To us the microscope and the telescope have en windows through which we have looked into the me of truth, and books have been windows into the inds of great thinkers, and we have thought it suffi-nt to look into these things from the outside. But we nnot know what it is like to live in the house of truth looking in at the windows.

Let me illustrate this with a very simple story about oy and the game of football.

One day last fall I was walking at dusk by a vacant . In the dim light I saw the shadowy form of a boy ing strange antics in the lot. He would run a little way and fall down, then get up and run some more and fall down. As I came closer I found that he was broadcasting what he was doing. All alone he was playing winning football before a stadium packed with people. "Tom Harmon has the ball," he shouted as he ran. "He's going around the end. Five yards, ten yards, he's down." Then he would fall, and spring up to run again and announce another thrilling play. Just as I came abreast of the lot Tom Harmon went over the end of the field for a touchdown. I could hear the crowds cheering, and I knew how thrilled "Tom" must be as he picked himself up after that final score and went dashing toward the "showers."

The point is very simple. If you had given that boy a book of rules about football he could have memorized them backwards and forwards and still have known nothing about football. But give him a headline player like Tom Harmon to emulate, and football begins to take on meaning. He begins to see the truth about football.

That is what Jesus was saying: "If you will play the game of life as I have played it, then are ye truly my disciples and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

III

One final implication of this text is of the greatest importance for our time. It is that *freedom-giving truth is truth that is related to the future.* To Jesus truth was not a matter of facts remaining out of a dead past, but rather a vital hope for the future. Jesus lived the life he did not that yesterday might be resurrected in him, but that a future yet unborn might begin to take shape through him. He sought a distant city, an undiscovered Kingdom.

Those who abide in Jesus' word, who live with his spirit and in the light of his vision, soon find that Christianity is primarily not something that has been, but something that can be. It belongs not so much to the past as to the future. The great prayer of Christianity is, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done."

I repeat that this is of the greatest importance for our time. It is tragic that we do not understand it more fully. For instance, people are saying in America that we must prepare to meet Mr. Hitler on his own level. When they say that, they mean that we must descend into the gutter and meet Mr. Hitler on the level of brute force, that we must swallow our pride and revert to the level of barbarism in order to deal with him effectively. But this is not true. It is a dangerous misinterpretation of fact. We must meet Mr. Hitler on a high level—on the level of vision, the level where truth is related to the future.

A news commentator said the other day that even though it is recognized as sheer suicide to attempt an invasion of England, three German youths would volunteer for every one needed, if Mr. Hitler should call. Why? Because German young men are anxious to die? Because they are eager to spill their blood on the chalky shores of England? Not for a minute. They are no more anxious to die than any of the rest of us. It is

rather because truth, to them, has become definitely related to the future. They are seeing visions of a "greater Germany" that can become a reality if they will do their part. They are living—and dying—in order that a great future may come to birth through them.

That German dream may be based on unmoral foundations; it may be a hopeless, heartless vision that Hitler has given his youth. I am not discussing that. But this I do know—that unless we can first of all meet Mr. Hitler and his friends and people on the level of vision, and produce a more convincing and compelling vision for the future of the whole world than he has produced, all our tanks and guns and battleships will be of no avail. For the hard reality is that you can't lick a dream with a question mark. Those who will rule the world tomorrow are those who have strong convictions about what the future ought to be!

We in the democracies must beware that we do not think of truth as something that we can find by looking over our shoulders. Truth that comes through memory is no match for truth that comes through hope.

This is what Jesus was talking about when he said: "If ye abide in my word—if you hold to my vision of the Kingdom of God—then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." In Christianity it is the vision of the Kingdom, of truth related to the future, that has captured the hearts and minds of the world. The followers of Jesus Christ live not to preserve the past, but to create the future.

The real fountain of freedom is the living, prophetic spirit of Jesus Christ.

MAN has increased horsepower without increasing horse sense. He seems to be mechanically a giant and morally a Lilliputian. The airplane has made it possible to be robbed at dinner-time in New York and shot at midnight in Chicago. Which is evidence that while man has conquered the earth and the sky, he hasn't conquered himself. Changing his environment, he has never been able to change his nature. It is a plain statement of open truth that man's only unsolved problem is man. WILL H. HOUGHTON.

WE LIVE in a badly frightened world. We must recover a more adventurous faith that has no room for self-pity and does not surrender to despair. Sooner or later right will prevail, in spite of the efforts of totalitarianism to destroy freedom. . . . The things that are crumbling in the world today deserve to crumble. The things that are worth saving will be saved. If once we make our way of life work people will not reject it, for history is more than Hitler. JOSEPH R. SIZOO.

WE are afraid of making Christianity too simple. Many of us are afraid because we still have a sin of pride. We think that Christianity must be something greater than . . . just the spectacle of a simple man who loves his brothers as God loves them. Something greater? There is nothing greater. ERNEST H. JEFFS.

Far from Home

A Meditation in Wartime

BY BERNARD IDDINGS BELL

For we are homesick in our homes
And strangers under the sun,
And we lay our heads in a foreign land
Whenever the day is done.

For the world is as wild as an old wives' tale
And strange the plain things are.
The earth is enough and the air is enough
For our wonder and our war;

But our rest is as far as the fire-drake swings
And our peace is put in impossible things
Where clash and thunder unthinkable wings
Round an incredible star.

SO sang Gilbert Chesterton in the midst of the First World War. Would he were here to speak to us in our present distress!

"I am a stranger in this earth": that is the universal testimony of understanding Christians who have caught some glimpse of their true destiny. How shall the citizen of Heaven taste of peace and happiness and good—his rightful heritage—in a barren and dry land where no water is?

I

This problem is as old as Christianity, and by no one is it more clearly faced than by St. Paul as he writes to the Christian people in Philippi. He arrived at his solution of the problem by way of remembering what it meant to be a citizen of imperial Rome, capital of the world, home of culture and beauty, and yet compelled by the exigencies of business to live in a dead-alive *colonia,* the capital of semi-barbarous Macedonia, the crude center of a province on the far edge of the empire.

The citizenship of such a man is not in poor half-civilized Philippi, wherein he needs must reside for the time being, but in glorious Rome, far, far away. He thinks of Rome with longing, a longing justified by what Rome really is. He daydreams of her forums, her glittering temples, her pageantry of reasoned might. In imagination he sits once more at her banquets and listens to conversations frivolous or wise but at any rate civilized—Home! And then this Roman goes out into the streets; and they are not the streets of Rome but only those of Philippi—narrow, provincial ways lined with mean buildings or, even worse, with structures that are pretentious and tasteless imitations of genuine Roman edifices; streets crowded by half-barbarians with bad manners and more than suspect morals, worshipers of idols in a base and yokel superstition. "I do not belong here," says the Roman. "My citizenship is in Rome. Woe is me that I must sojourn in Macedonia, and dwell among the hovels of Thrace!"

II

Even so is the lot of the Christian. His citizenship is not to be found, can never be found, amid the con-

ending and provincial crudities of this world, whereinto for awhile the business of living has exiled him, but in the City of God. The Christian thinks of that City with longing, a longing justified by what Heaven really is. He daydreams of the harmonious security of eternal walls wherein is no need of armament, of courts in which move the saints on affairs of glad devotion. With ears of the spirit he hears the melodies of gaiety born of peace. In his imagination he takes part in the converse of the holy ones—gay or serious but truly civilized. He beholds the King whose glory is so transforming that there they need no sun to brighten the day, neither the moon to shine by night. There are no

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tears in heavenly Salem—no fears, no hate, no cruelty, no death.

And then the Christian goes into the world and looks about him. The crash of masonry shattered by explosives, the babble of lies in headlines and in statesmen's speeches—"oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, the pangs of disprized love, the law's delay, the insolence of office and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes." These he sees, and worse; denial of all that might make life worth living, contempt of God by them who live amid a stew of braggart boasting. "I do not belong here," cries the Christian. "My citizenship is in Heaven. Woe is me that I am constrained to dwell with Meshech, and to leave my habitation among the tents of Kedar. Too long hath my soul dwelt among them that are enemies unto peace."

St. Paul understood a good deal about what it means to be a Christian. Yes, he certainly did. But St. Paul does not stop there, with a recognition of this longing nostalgia. Instead he goes right on to something more important.

III

There were three possible attitudes for the Roman citizen to take in that provincial, dingy Philippi.

First, he might perhaps forget—as far as possible—about Philippi, ignore its self-soiled crudity and degradation, shut himself up in his house (which of course he would make as Rome-like and lovely as possible) and let Philippi go its wretched way.

Or second, he might decide that Rome was a long way off and himself unlikely to be called there soon, while meanwhile close at hand lay Philippi. Why dream of Rome? When you are in Philippi, had you not best do as the Philippians do? It might be a low sort of life that they would let you live with them; but at least it would be vigorous and you could have friends, such as they were. You would not be lonely, at any rate, if you resigned your high standards and forgot your love of better things and went out to be yourself a run-of-mine Philippian. What would a little dirt matter? Is not dirt in company a better thing, perhaps, than cleanliness alone? Since you could not listen any more to Cicero or Seneca, how about a little pot-house conversation here and now to break the monotony? You would at least have pals in compromise.

Or third, he could remain in heart and life a Roman, and still in all friendliness go abroad in Philippi. Then, it might be, he could make clear to the Philippians his love of them, Rome's love of them, even though one did not, could not, mingle in their brawling. Perhaps, just perhaps, he could make, or help to make, a Philippi more like his own beloved city; but even if he failed in that, even though Philippi rejected his love and despised him for his pains, even though Philippi went on its wicked way and laughed at him, or killed him, still it would have been well worth while thus to have cared about Philippi with heart and soul—and yet remained every inch a Roman.

The first of these three attitudes would be that of a *snob;* the second would be that of a *coward;* the third would be that of a *gentleman.*

IV

These same three attitudes are possible for the Christian, whose citizenship is in Heaven but who has domicile among the dwellers on this earth.

First, the Christian may, if he desires, ignore to the best of his ability the sad estate of earth, withdraw as much as may be from the contagion or even the contemplation of its wickedness and war, its greed and grubbiness, its superstructure of tinsel glory erected on an unsubstantial foundation, and devote himself to meditation and the cultivation of his own soul—retire to his spiritual house and therein make his utterly private life Heaven-like and delightful. Thus to live is to become a spiritual snob; and the end of spiritual snobbery is damnation. "Being otherworldly," in this sense of the term, is to lose not only earth but Heaven too.

Or second, the Christian may tell himself that Heaven is a long way off, and that it is a great while

till he shall go home, while febrile earth is near, and unredeemed mankind both fecund and friendly. The chants of angel choirs sound but faint; the swing-bands blare out, hot and sweet and strident. Spiritual comradeships seem distant; carnal joys are near at hand. Would it be calamitous, really, for the Christian to buy what earth, unredeemed earth, has to sell, even at the cost of blunted perceptiveness and coarsened taste? May one not rightly barter at least a little of one's soul for savory pottage, even though the pottage be made of strong goat's flesh stewed in garlic? Mighty is the temptation to forget that Heavenly City of which the joys are real—we know their reality—but at the moment out-of-mind. Let us taste of lust and luxury, surrender to clamor and make greedy appeal to the sword; let us be "men of the world." It is too hard a thing, too lonely a thing, to be faithful to a homeland far removed from daily sight.

Or third, one may remain in heart and practice a true Christian and still make clear one's love for them whose life is merely of the earth; it is possible to be in one's world, and yet not of that world. Perhaps, just perhaps, in that way one can make, or help to make, on earth a society more and more like that which exists in one's beloved City of God; but even if one fail in that, even though they who are of earth reject one's love, despise one for one's pains, laugh in contempt, even kill, still it will have been worth while thus to have tried to be a wise and faithful subject of the King of Heaven, here in *colonia.*

Spiritual *snob,* spiritual *coward,* spiritual *witness*—one of the three a Christian must be. He can choose which one, once he knows from what fair City he has come and to what Commonwealth he may return—God grant it!—when pilgrimage is done.

Skylines

By George H. Tolley

SKYLINES are spectacular. They claim attention. They cling to the memory. They move us strangely, unaccountably from wistfulness to tears to hope. At this moment three skylines of the summer possess me; I will not be free until I have set them free.

There is the marvelous panorama of the great city after dark as seen from the slender spire of a graceful skyscraper. Little strings of pearls radiate in all directions as far as one can see. This string is a world-famed boulevard; that a breath-taking bridge spanning the streams which separate three boroughs; yonder one, the elevator shaft of a deserted building. Two pin-points of light move noiselessly toward us and our hearts wonder who may be driving behind them, and on what errand. It is unforgettable! It lingers forever.

There is that never-to-be-forgotten sight of the endless sands along the seashore. The breaking surf borders the glaring white of the beach with an everchanging lace work of bluish-green. The multicolored costumes of bathers, the umbrellas of picnickers stand out in such brilliant relief as would delight the eye of Titian. To see, as I did at Jones Beach, over half million people stretched along the miles of ocean sho is to be possessed of a vision that will remain for lifetime.

There is the wide extending landscape to be se from the mountain top on a clear day. It was our goo fortune to be in the fire warden's lookout tower perch on its slim stilts atop Mt. Crotched on the clearest d of the summer. Our horizon was a circle with a radi of sixty or seventy miles. Neatly mitred squares sto out, the cleared fields of growing grain; denser areas contrasting darker green were the woods in their p meval glory; thin ribbons of gray, the roads and rails travel and commerce; and dots of white, the isolat farm buildings and the closely huddled houses of v lages. All of this is engraved forever upon the sen tized film of memory.

Skylines are like that! Having touched us, they r main with us, claim us as their own, possess us wi bulldog tenacity.

I

Every man, looking at his own private skylines, i terprets them as is his bent. The artist sees beauty his—the beauty of line and form and color and co position. The practical man of business sees producti processes—of manufacture, or agriculture, of engine ing, of distribution. The romanticist sees loveliness the loveliness of wondrous experiences rivaling all t fairylands man has ever built. And the man of re gious bent, what does he see?

He must see God! the God who created the heave which form his boundaries and the earth enclos within. This God is a God of law, law manifested the great feats of engineering. He is a God of ma velous fertility revealed in the green verdure of fi and forest. He is a God of infinite power, power su gested by the restless ebb and flow of the tides. All this he must see, and more he *may* see! More inde he must see, if he be a follower of Jesus.

II

Jesus saw skylines. He speaks of the signs in the s —clouds in the west mean rain, wind from the sou precedes weather blistering hot. From the hilltop looked down upon the great city of Jerusalem a drank it in. His penetrating vision moved from t scintillating skyline to the squalid street beneath. his eye traversed that squalid street, it halted now a then. Here was a ghoulish specter of a woman snat ing garbage from the gutter that starvation might staved off. Yonder was the half-frightened boy clut ing furtively the spoils of his first criminal assau There was the screaming and cursing of every collisi between Jew and Arab. And at the nearer end was t eternal bickering of the market place.

Often do I wonder if as Jesus looks down upon t city his eyes do not fill again with tears, if his hea does not say that the scene is little changed from a cient Jerusalem. Our city has its myriad convenienc all of them unknown to Old Jerusalem. Houses a

tter built, streets are wider and paved, machines have placed the porter and the pack animal, electricity the ndle, printer's ink the chisel and the quill. But these e all superficial. What about men—have they changed ıy? And as the tears fill the Master's eyes I can hear m sigh: "Still lost, still lost."

What desolation is abroad in our midst! The hysrical howling of nation against nation but echoes the tal loss of moral and spiritual insights among the en of the world. We walk as in a daze knowing ither where we are going nor why we may be going ere. Heart bankruptcy has overtaken us. And Jesus eeps again, weeps for us.

GEORGE H. TOLLEY

But he still has his skylines. And out of those skyes must come the salvation for our lost inspiration, thusiasm, energy and moral direction. What is it at Jesus would send from the scintillating skyline to squalid street of our city?

III

He would have us recover an active faith. In our urches we have talked almost endlessly about our th in God. We have described him as a loving ther whose only weapon is the sacrifice and the serv- which spring from love. We have talked enough. e must now live.

Tomorrow, when you go to your office, you must e God with you. You haven't been doing that, you w. You have been taking yourself with you—and a ole mess of commercial conventions and customs ich have no slightest relationship to the God you fess. Could you live your faith as did the brave ristian prisoner confronted by a furious Roman magistrate? "I will banish thee," said the magistrate. "Thou canst not," was the reply, "the whole world is my Father's house." "I will slay thee," said the magistrate. "Thou canst not," was the reply, "for my life is hid with Christ in God." "I will take away thy treasures." "Thou canst not," he answered, "for my treasure is in heaven." "I will drive thee away from man and thou shalt have no friend left." "Thou canst not," said the Christian, "for I have a Friend from whom thou canst not separate me." With God that close and that real to us, there is nothing more for us to fear. Repose of the soul will have come. Peace of the spirit will give life its needed strength and courage. Faith we must take from the skyline down into the street.

IV

He would have us recover hope! God knows we need it. This day is one of futility if ever there was one. Most of us feel like tiny boats cast adrift in the middle of the ocean, blown about by every passing blast of superheated wind, waiting only for the inevitable moment when we shall be capsized. The only hope I have heard voiced in months is that things may get no worse.

This futility may be an excellent thing. Having discovered how impotent we are, we may be willing to lean on God once more. Really we haven't given God a chance recently, have we? We have done just what we wanted to do, haven't we? By the pragmatic test we have failed, utterly. Suppose we should live our faith in God, see what that would mean. It would mean surrendering ourselves to his guidance, no matter where that would take us. And his guidance would undoubtedly take us into situations we would prefer to avoid.

But whatever suffering it may impose upon us, there is hope that way. God does not lead us into futility; his guidance is toward the freedom of spirit, the peace of mind which is so little known today. When we have surrendered ourselves to him, then indeed dare we hope.

V

He would urge upon us a recovery of love! And there is precious little of it left in this day. How can there be? When things go wrong, someone must always be blamed. When as many things go wrong as have during the last decade, the blame must be scattered so broadly that no one escapes it completely. I have been amazed at the bitterness I find in the finest circles toward the scapegoats we have created to assuage the hurts of our failures.

But bitterness has never solved anything! Even though our predicament be the fault of the Jew, or the Negro, or the labor leader, or the New Deal; even though the plight of this awful day be blamed on banker, economist, financial wizard or industrial baron (and it is yet to be demonstrated that any of these are truly guilty); what can attacks do but widen the present breach and make a decent solution all but impossible? Christ has taught us to love our enemies, to

pray for those who despitefully use us; and history has yet to bring forth a better way to heal a disagreement.

The plaintive story Leslie Weatherhead tells is especially appropriate to our day. "A little laddie in my Sunday school, who had been told not to go near an iron grating in the street where he lived, since the grating was known to be loose, disobeyed his mother's instructions, played on the grating, fell through and broke his leg.

"Things went wrong, and for a time it was thought that he would never be able to walk again, and, very unfortunately, the nurse was careless enough to let the little chap hear this report. When his mother came to see him she bent over him lovingly and the tears welled up in his big brown eyes. He wound his arms around her neck and said: 'Mummy, I know it was my fault and I disobeyed you. But if I can never walk or run again, will you go on loving me?' You can imagine the answer. 'Then,' said the little chap smiling through his tears, 'I can bear anything.' "

Blame the scapegoat if you must; but do it with love in your heart. He may accept some of the blame, then; and knowing your love, he is apt to offer himself in a cooperative effort to find the permanent solution.

Let us take faith, hope, love from the Skylines above us and plant them firmly in the streets beneath that they may possess us all and claim our lives.

God Bless America—With What?

By Harold L. Proppe

AT A MEETING we attended some time ago, a newsreel was shown advertising the New York World's Fair. Among the scenes shown was that of a great gathering in the Hall of States Plaza with a well known radio artist singing "God Bless America." As the artist sang there were flashed on the screen scenes from various parts of the United States selected to illustrate various phrases of the song. There were nature scenes of towering granite mountains, tumbling waterfalls, waving fields of grain, and hillsides teeming with grazing sheep. There were pictures of industrial centers; shipyards, rushing streamliner trains and flying airplanes. All these were shown as justifiable reasons why God should "bless America." They were shown in such a way as to convey to the listeners and viewers the idea that the strength of America resided in these assets. As is so often the case with moving pictures, it made interesting entertainment, but was not true to facts.

Is national security and stability rooted in such assets as were presented by the movie camera? Not one word would I write in any way to discredit the fact that we possess these things. We are a great nation, we possess over half of the world's gold, more than 40 per cent of its silver, 50 per cent of the zinc, 60 per cent of the copper, 66 per cent of the oil, 40 per cent of the railroads, and 85 per cent of all the automobiles.

However, as the singer sang "God Bless America" and these scenes were thrown on the screen, some oth stubborn facts kept intruding into my mind. Shou God bless America when there are in the United Stat millions of children and young people under twent three years of age who receive no religious instructi or training through any agency, either Catholic, Pr testant or Jewish? Although a Gallup poll has told that Americans who know the Bible regard it as t most interesting book they have read, another surv reveals that out of 7,600 American homes questione 2,900—or almost half of them—did not possess a sing copy of the Holy Writ.

HUMILIATING CONDITIONS

Should God bless America when there is a che forged every 3½ minutes, night and day, in the Unit States, when a major crime is committed every seconds in America; when one home in every four touched by crime; when there are 4,000,750 in t army of the lawless; when there is one divorce for eve six marriages in the United States; when 70 per ce of the arrests made are due to liquor? Should God bl America when $628,000,000 is spent on commerci vice; when almost unbelievable sums are spent on dru and narcotics, lost on commercial frauds, or expend for crime annually? Take a single instance: it co $1,500,000 for the government to capture John D linger—besides the lives of several good men. That o criminal in four months cost the government more th our denomination gave to missions in a year.

Former President Herbert Hoover once said: am wondering whether the time has not come realize that we are confronted with a national necessi of the first degree, that we are not suffering from ephemeral crime wave but from a subsidence of o foundations." Is this condition an asset? "If the fou dations are destroyed what can the righteous do?"

Why should God bless America? What abo America's religious faith? Faith in a personal God an indispensable asset to our national security. Religio faith, we are beginning to realize, may be somethi more important than a matter of personal choice a comfort, something that has to do with national nece sity and public safety. There must be a general convi tion of sin and a great moral awakening. If our peop are to experience a "rebirth of freedom" in the re sense of that word, and should they muster the will defend it, that must be, as Lincoln said, "under God

THE BIBLE AND LIBERTY

The reading of the Bible in homes and schools is asset to our national security. Tyranny has never pr vailed long when men read the Bible to themselves. N wonder modern dictators fear and hate it! Speaki concerning the Bible, Woodrow Wilson once sai "This is a Book that reveals every man to himself as distinct moral agent, responsible not to men, but to h Lord and Maker. Whenever a man sees this vision stands up a free man."

William Penn warned the people of his time th

soon as men refuse to be ruled by God and his laws ey condemn themselves to be ruled by a man, and at man usually a tyrant. And is not that just what we ar today?

Regular times of worship and prayer are assets to r national security. Daily over the radio we listen the news from Europe. We attune our ears to public inion, to "soap opera," and what somebody is saying an effort to sell a certain brand of liquor or cigar-te. Cannot we take time to listen also to the voice of od and the words of his Son as they come to us from e Scriptures, and is the home not a good place in hich to begin?

Why should God bless America?—not because we ve great material assets, but because we are right ith him and under God have learned how to use those aterial assets aright. Of what value is it to be "rich d increased in goods" as a nation if we do not know w to use them in the building of Christian charac-r in the lives of the citizens who make up our nation? rely it is better to arrive at our destination in a horse d buggy than to end our journey in the ditch in a olls-Royce.

How can we get right with God as a nation? Hear od himself give the answer: "If my people, which e called by my name, shall humble themselves, and ay, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ays; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive eir sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron. 7:14). ow can we learn rightly to use what we have? Hear e Holy Spirit speak through the Apostle James: f any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that veth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it all be given him."

A Pentecost of Love

If the hurt and heartache of the world is to be healed, if there is to be love where now there is hate; if bitter racial rancors are to be cleansed away, if the shadow of war is to be lifted from the life of man, setting us free to create a world fellowship; if the race is to be led toward a juster, wiser, more merciful social order, and the light of the gospel sent into all the dark corners of the earth, it will be by the union of those who have found in Jesus the way, the truth and the life—by a pentecost of love and a baptism of brotherhood. Nothing can save the church and make it equal to the tragic necessities of our age except the power of him who created it—nothing but the red passion of the love of God and the white fire of his Spirit in our hearts. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON.

In a day in which men's hearts are full of fear and all about us is unrest and insecurity, the troubled soul finds need of succor which this world's resources cannot provide. The Word of God alone contains the curative prescription for such suffering. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me."

To the one whose "hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness" there comes the joy of knowing sins forgiven. It is such an one's portion to experience "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" and which keeps men's hearts and minds. I praise the Lord that, as a physician, he has given me the privilege of testifying to his saving grace and keeping power. DR. THOMAS M. DURANT, Temple University Medical School.

A Pastoral Prayer

By KING D. BEACH

ETERNAL SPIRIT, our righteous Father revealed to us in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, hou art never far from any one of us. We live, how-er, so much in the material realm that we are often ind to Thy presence, slow and dull to find Thee. In is sacred time and place may the scales fall from our es so that we may become conscious of Thee, con-dent of Thy truth, open to Thy guidance. We come om the earth, but we belong to Thee and to Thy ghteousness. We are Thy children. Though often ining Thee by neglect and perverseness, we are yet hy children and are truly happy only when loyal to ir heavenly heritage. Each of us would add to the ppy seriousness, the alert devotion, the far-reaching pentances and reconsecrations of our worship. We eld ourselves to its gentle leadings, recover joy in hy forgiving grace, rededicate ourselves to Christ and s way of living, gird ourselves anew for courageous d kindly helpfulness, gain joyous strength for all ties.

We thank Thee, O God, for the noble succession of faithful valiants who in this and other generations have kept the Christian fires burning even through flood and tempest. We thank Thee for mothers and fathers, loving, sacrificial and wise; for children and youth with growing ability and strength; for leaders bearing the heavy responsibilities of industry, commerce, government, church, schools, health. We thank Thee for farmers, mechanics, day laborers and transportation workers providing for our daily needs; for multitudes who endure disappointments without bitterness, burdens without complaint, hardship without hatred, sorrow without despair. If we abide in safety and plenty, may we not forget the sad victims of hatred and bigotry and famine and cruelty and despotism throughout the world, and also on our own streets.

Help us to keep liberty and justice and righteousness flourishing here, in this beloved land of ours, not merely for our sakes, but for the world's sake and for Christ's sake. Amen.

The Rural Pastor's Message to His People

By Mark Rich

THE central Christian truths are universally applicable and do not know time nor season. Yet, since every truth is understood and practiced in relation to the environment in which it is proclaimed, preaching for rural people in part needs to be expressed in different form than for metropolitan audiences. Realistic preaching always applies the timeless truths to the immediate situation. The immediate situation for the rural minister is a rural congregation in a rural environment. We shall consider five aspects of rural preaching.

● *I. The Preparation of the Message*

The town and country minister stands in particular danger of underestimating the importance and thus slighting the preparation for his message. His congregation is not large and does not make great ado about his sermons. Therefore, he does not feel the urgency of his word as does the pastor whose words are heeded by hundreds. Neither does he always have the best facilities for study. His shelf of books is not adequate.

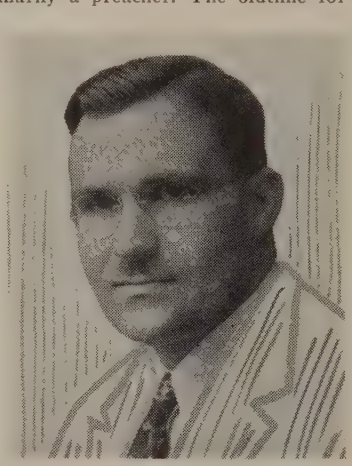
There are temptations to squander time. The telephone rings; Mrs. Brown needs to be taken to the hospital. This is urgent, but the pastor easily allows it to set a habit of irregularity. Henry, the lame one, has come in for a two-hour talk feast in the middle of the morning and it seems rude to shut him off. The lure of the garden, fixing the pump, or patching a tire, the temptation of lingering over the morning paper, the growing inertia of a leisurely tempo allow hours to go by without giving time to study. Such interruptions make it easy for the country minister to become laggard in the preparation of his message.

The sinister nature of the temptation is revealed in these words from a rural worker whose facilities for study are above average: "I can do practically no reading. I have enough reading to last me a lifetime." Two hours a week was all he could find for study. Yielding to such temptation is a fatal mistake. One of the finest blessings of the town and country minister comes as he husbands his time to have long hours for building up the resources of his mental and spiritual life. The difference between those who do and those who do not is often only a matter of fidelity to purpose and the will to do. The pastor who loses this purpose soon becomes an announcer of a stereotyped gospel out of which all creative and life-giving elements have been removed. One of the ablest young rural ministers I know religiously spends five mornings a week, beginning at 8 o'clock, in the study.

● *II. The Place of the Message*

Country people appreciate good sermons. No people in the world are more capable of enjoying a sound message than are people who live near the soil. The sage advice to the young preacher still holds: "When you go to the country, take your best sermon."

Yet, the country pastor is not primarily a preacher. The oldtime formula for a country minister embraces a large truth: "Two-thirds pastoral ability and one-third preaching." The country minister is a spiritual leader who lives intimately with his flock. He is known first as a man, and secondarily as a preacher. He should not try to emulate the brilliant metropolitan pulpiteer whose voice speaks to the nation. He does not have that kind of pulpit. The downfall of churches comes when they are made preaching stations instead of Christian fellowships. This estimate of the place of preaching in no sense belittles its importance, but places it in a proper position in the total task of a minister.



Mark Rich

● *III. The Subject of the Message*

Rural churches probably suffer as much from faddist preaching as do any. This is particularly true wher churches are dependent on part-tim untrained leaders with an inadequa comprehension of the resources fo Christian living and without perspe tive. But faddism is not limited t those with meager training. It is temptation which befalls all, and which many succumb. It may expre itself in a constant reiteration of th second coming, or a weekly essay o the reconstruction of the social orde a harping upon the necessity of th second blessing or a regular Sunda verbal bombardment for the outlaw of war.

The scope of rural preaching shoul be as broad as is the Christian gospe It should introduce the hearers to th richness of biblical truth and giv them a balanced ration for spiritu growth. The riches of Christ are i exhaustible. To utilize these resource the preacher must know his Bible, h must read widely and choose his book well, he should mingle freely with th people of his church and his commu nity. He should know human natu from wide experience and he shoul have a broad understanding of th interests of rural people through a quaintance with their activities. Ther cannot be good rural preaching with out this.

There are several essential fields preaching which have been neglecte in rural churches or which shou have more emphasis. Particular timely is that quality of preachin which elevates fellowship, cooperatio and world-mindedness and which lea people away from the "littlenesses" wider comprehensions and comrad ship.

● *Rural Life as Sourc of Sermon*

There is, however, one field preaching to which we shall giv special attention. It is the type of se mon which grows out of the natur environment of rural life. From th source Jesus gathered substance fo one-half of his recorded parables. Th Christian Rural Fellowship puts i "To promote understanding and a preciation of the spiritual valu which abide in the processes and rel tionships of agriculture and rur life."

In Charles Kingsley, the Englis country preacher and man of letter we have an example of one who foun inspiration in nature. This love of n ture was one of the most notable his characteristics. "Do not stu

tter," he exhorted his people, "for own sake, but as the countenance God! Study the sky! Study water! dy trees! Study the sounds and nts of nature! Study the forms and or of leaves and flowers, and the wth and habit of plants; not to ssify them, but to admire them and adore God!"

What then are some of the texts l themes in these fields of rural ? One can get themes from the ble and from everyday experience. A theme worthy of repeated con-eration has been termed "the gospel the holy earth." God created the rld. He alone is responsible for the itage of soil, minerals, timber, ter and other resources upon which n is completely dependent. He is author of the creative processes which life continues. Therefore se are holy and man should not de-oy or waste in one generation what d has made for the good of many erations. This is the gospel of the y earth. One of its ablest advocates Liberty Hyde Bailey, botanist, ru-life leader, and author of *The ly Earth.*

● *Sermons Close to the Soil*

The field from which sermons may taken is limitless. The sainted arles E. Jefferson did superb work preaching on topics such as "The inbow," "Deserts," "Birds," "Sun-s," "Mists," "Odors," "Lakes," l others of a kindred nature. Trees ke the subject of sermons with damental Christian teaching. Some the great Bible texts have to do h mountains. A few years ago a ume of sermons written by men in egion of noble mountains included one text related in any way to se majestic peaks. Did they not w that as the mountains lie about rusalem, so the Lord is round about people?

Soil, plant breeding with its miracu-us achievements, and such processes pruning, cultivation and propaga-n make topics for sermons. For cial days there may be a sermon "Sundays on the Farm" in which benefits of Sunday observance are olled, or in December it may be ses in December," or on a Com-nion Sunday "Bread" opens up a alth of meanings for those gathered reak the bread of the spirit.

For sermons on social and economic tice one can find background in the l Testament. Amos speaks plainly. e must be cautious in using pas-es such as Hosea 6:16, which ds, "Israel slideth back as a back-ing heifer." The members of the gregation might take the truth too rally. Yet in the Old Testament se of righteousness and justice a ntry preacher of today finds a is for a long neglected treatment of basic social and economic maladjustments of rural life.

● *IV. Characteristics of the Message*

A first important quality in rural preaching is simplicity. Let no one think that simplicity is easily achieved. Simplicity of expression comes through great effort and practice and a clear understanding of subject. Theology always will be important. It is a necessary part of the conveyance of truth. And yet, theological, academic and philosophical preaching may be a blight in the rural church. Let it be reactionary, conservative, liberal or modern, whatever the point of view, abstract theological preaching is not native to the rural soil and must be used judicially.

But truth put simply in language that people understand, is the essence of good rural preaching. Gustav Frenssen, the German village preacher and novelist, practiced this art. Frenssen is a doctor of theology and a doctor of philosophy, although it is reported that he has almost completely escaped the influence of both. For him the physical and spiritual things of life are first, and man's efforts to explain them of secondary importance. I think it should be so with every minister.

● *Light from a Great German Preacher*

See the beautiful simplicity which characterizes Frenssen's sermons. Here is one entitled "Jesus of Nazareth" which begins "Last week we had a dreadful snowstorm. It came from the north-north-east and swept across our fields against our village. In its wild career it built long irregular white ramparts to keep out the Spring which is just now advancing from the south. It filled the air with white arrows which drove men into their houses, the birds into the shelter of the eaves."

Another desirable quality of rural preaching is that it should be direct. A rural pastor cannot be thunderously direct when he preaches to his intimate group, as is the custom with some who preach to large crowds. He knows the failings of each person in his congregation, and an unmerciful slaying of some sin may be a direct hit at one of the members and all the rest will know it. That is cruelly direct, and not good preaching, because it publicly points out one, and therefore is not applicable to all.

By direct preaching we mean speaking to the heart of people in a straightforward way as one does when dealing with people face to face. A rural preacher becomes a friend among friends. When he preaches he is not preaching for his professor of homiletics, neither for the logician or even the grammarian. Certainly he is not addressing an anticipated pulpit committee. He is speaking to his people about the deep things of God and the spirit.

● *Stentorian Preaching to Be Avoided*

A stilted, far-away, stentorian type of preaching may suit large congregations (it likely does not), but it certainly should not be practiced in the country. Speak directly and with a sense of the reality of God at the time and place when you speak. Says Arthur W. Hewitt, in *Highland Shepherds:* "There is only one way which is perfectly natural for the rural pulpit and that is a forthright, eye-to-eye, heart-to-heart, conversational method of extemporaneous speech."

A third characteristic of rural preaching is that it should be graphic, illustrated and vivid. George Herbert, the beloved English poet and country parson, long ago discovered this truth. He wrote in his book, *A Priest to the Temple:*

"When he preacheth he procures attention by all possible art, both by earnestness of speech (it being natural to men to think that where is much earnestness there is somewhat worth hearing), and by a diligent and busy cast of his eye on his auditors, with letting them know that he observes who marks and who not; and with particularizing of his speech—now to the younger folk, then to the elder; now to the poor, and now to the rich: 'This is for you, and this is for you;' for particulars ever touch and awake more than generals. . . . Sometimes he tells them stories and sayings of others, according as his text invites him; for them also men heed and remember better than exhortations, which though earnest, yet often die with the sermon, especially with country people, which are thick and heavy, and hard to raise to a point of zeal and fervency, and need a mountain of fire to kindle them; but stories and sayings they will well remember."

● *The Mood of the Message*

Only recently a village pastor said that in each service he made a determined effort to bring out a note of joy or hope. Great preaching is serious preaching, but it is not scolding. There is enough scolding outside the church. Worshipers should enter his gates with thanksgiving. So let the dominant note of a rural pastor's message be of courage, hope and triumph. The sunshine of eternal love should continually be shed abroad in the hearers' hearts.

Preaching to rural people, when well done and in order, can be a beautiful expression of the saving truths of an eternal gospel.

• WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE •

REV. S. E. GERARD PRIESTLEY *came* from England to this country in 1936 to preach under the auspices of the World Alliance and while here was called to the distinguished pulpit of the Church of the Divine Paternity, New York. During the summers of 1937-39 Mr. Priestley preached extensively in Europe. He is widely known as a writer and lecturer on international affairs and during the past three years has preached and lectured in thirty-nine states of the Union.

For a number of years Rev. PHILIP ALLEN SWARTZ was a secretary of the Federal Council, but last year he returned to the pastorate as minister of First Congregational Church, Poughkeepsie, N. Y. Earlier pastorates included Third Presbyterian, Rochester, N. Y., Central Union, Honolulu, and First Congregational, La-Grange, Ill. At various periods he has been secretary of the Student Movement, secretary of the foreign department of the Y.M.C.A., director of religious and social work for the Rockefeller Foundation in Peking Medical College, and secretary of China relief organizations.

Rev. ARNOLD HILMAR LOWE *has recently* left the Kingshighway Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, where he had ministered for 14 years, to accept a call to the Westminster Church in Minneapolis. Receiving degrees from the College of Wooster and the Western Theological Seminary, Mr. Lowe pursued post graduate studies at New York University and in Switzerland. For several years he served as a missionary in West Africa. For eight years he was professor of biblical literature at Missouri Valley Bible College. Last April he was installed as president of the Board of Christian Education of his denomination to succeed Rev. Hugh T. Kerr of Pittsburgh.

Rev. SAMUEL W. MARBLE *has been* minister of Trinity Methodist Church, Denver, since 1939. For seven years he was pastor of First Method Albuquerque, the largest church in New Mexico. He ceived A.B. and D.D. degrees from Dakota Wesley He is a frequent speaker at youth conferences.

Since 1936 Rev. FRANKLIN D. ELM JR., has ministered at First Baptist Church, Lockpo N. Y. An earlier pastorate was at DeKalb, Ill. M Elmer graduated at Brown University in 1927 and at University of Chicago in 1930. His sermon published this issue was preached at the First Baptist Chur Providence, R. I.—the first Baptist church in America

Rev. BERNARD IDDINGS BELL *was de* of St. Paul's Cathedral, Fond du Lac, Wis., 1913- warden of St. Stephen's College, 1919-33; and has be preaching canon at St. John's Cathedral, Providen R. I., since 1933. During his years at St. Stephen's he w for three years professor of religion at Columbia. He ceived his education at the University of Chicago a Western Theological Seminary, Chicago.

Graduating from the University Rochester and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, R GEORGE H. TOLLEY became junior minister at First B tist Church, Kansas City, Mo., under the late Dr. A. F Petty. Thence he went to Second Baptist, St. Louis, a served there for eight years. Last fall he accepted a c to Calvary Baptist, Minneapolis.

Rev. HAROLD L. PROPPE *has been m* ister of the First Baptist Church, Hollywood, Cal since 1929. An earlier pastorate was at College Aven Baptist, Indianapolis.

Rev. KING D. BEACH *is minister of* Trinity Methodist Church, Kansas City, Mo.

Rev. MARK RICH *is field represen* tive of the department of town and country work of American Baptist Home Missionary Society.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

WAYNE L. BRADEN, Congregational, Marietta, O. "God's Revelation in a Nation's Life." I Peter 2:9—"But ye are a holy nation that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you."

T. R. PENDELL, First Methodist, Elgin, Ill. "Where on Earth Is God?" Mal. 2:17—"Where is the God of justice?"

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
Title of sermon
. . . . . .
Text used (write out the text)
. . . . . .
Name of minister
. . . . . .
Name of church
. . . . . .
Address

L. C. SANDERS, Methodist, Appalachia, Pa. "Being Credit to Christ." Phil. 1:20—"I shall do Christ cre by my unfailing courage." (Short Bible)

ELMER S. FREEMAN, Essex Community, Chicago. " Hold the World Together." Matt. 28:19a—"Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations."

CLARENCE A. HANNA, First Church of Christ, To wanda, N. Y. "Worthless If Detached." John 15:5 "Apart from me ye can do nothing."

D. W. CHARLTON, Eastport Baptist, Annapolis, Md. "I hind the Dim Unknown." Jer. 4:23—"I look out earth—lo, all is chaos. . . ." 20:11—"Ah, but I ha the Eternal on my side."

WINTHROP S. HUDSON, Normal Park Baptist, Chica "It Is Belief That Matters." Mark 9:23—"If th canst believe, all things are possible."

HAROLD C. PHILLIPS, First Baptist, Cleveland, O. Don't Feel Like It." Rom. 15:3—"For even Chr pleased not himself."

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The Event of the Month

ADD Toronto to the list of cities whose names are cut into the foundation stones of the new church universal which is coming into being. Stockholm d Lausanne, Oxford and Edinburgh, Madras and nsterdam have all become familiar to us because in each of these cities there met representatives of the divided church of Christ from all lands to seek the ways of fellowship and unity. The North nerican Ecumenical Conference held in Toronto, ne 3-5, was not so comprehensive in representation, r so ambitious in its program as those denoted by the mes of other cities, but it had a special significance of own. The war made a general ecumenical gathering possible at this time, but the churches of North Amer- could meet in the ecumenical spirit for discussion of e problems presented by the war and for prayer that e church might not be further divided in the heats d strains of the world conflict. Probably 250 dele- tes participated, representing mainly the churches of e United States and Canada, but including also a few om Latin North America. The points at which the ity of the Christian fellowship must be guarded were ro. First, as, between Canadian and American church- and secondly, as between those Christians in all the urches who hold conflicting convictions regarding e Christian attitude toward war in general or this ar in particular. The conference appeared to be unani- ous in feeling that this is the time to emphasize and velop the conception of the church as super-national d super-factional, in the unity of whose fellowship in rist all our tensions may be resolved. Division solves thing but only exacerbates differences and dishonors im who is the Head of the church.

The Toronto Conference

The Book of the Month

URRENT RELIGIOUS THOUGHT. *By Charles S. Macfarland. Fleming H. Revell. $1.50.*

RETIRED after a distinguished career as general secretary of the Federal Council of Churches, Dr. Macfarland continues to render service to all by reviewing books of theological significance for e religious press. The present volume is the fourth nual collection of these reviews in book form, and in- grated into a unity for the purpose of exhibiting the rious schools of thought which obtain in our day. The thor calls it a "Digest." And this it is. Dr. Macfar- nd knows how to take the essential argument and sition of a theological writer and set it forth so that reader can really grasp it. In this respect he may be d to possess what I would call "the reviewer's con- ence," a characteristic too frequently lacking in many mmentators on books. But all the while he writes as nan with convictions of his own. His personal point view, instead of distorting the work which he is igesting," only sharpens the lines of the author's posi- tion. This is as it should be. In this volume Dr. Macfarland reviews forty-five books. These are well selected —though I note one omission which modesty forbids me to mention!—and produce the effect of a photograph of the theological mind of the past year. In a concluding chapter Dr. Macfarland presents an analysis of the theological scene whose picture is made up of the books he has reviewed. I find his entire work fascinating and profitable reading, and I would commend it to all readers of The Christian Century Pulpit.

A Thought for the Month

CONCERNING the Christian conscience and war I am compelled to confess that I am what might be called an agnostic—I do not know what is right. This is not a comfortable position to be in. It may not be an admirable one. But I am making an honest confession. The problem has engrossed my thought for the past twenty-five years, and now that I must live daily in the presence of war I think of little else. I have never been able to take the pacifist position and say that under no circumstances will I support war. Yet my mind is haunted by the fear that in my indecision I am falling below the demands which Christ makes upon those who call him Lord. Fortunately—or unfortunately?—I have not yet had to face the issue in such concrete form that it required a personal decision. Since the problem was first thrust upon me during the other world war, my country has not been at war. Nor is it now. If I were of draft age, I would probably have to come to terms with the issue in connection with the conscription law. If the United States were now to go to war, a decision would surely be forced upon me. But I am unable to make a definitive decision in the abstract. I am not sure enough of my power to envisage all the possibilities of a war situation. My Christian pacifist friends will perhaps characterize this as weakness, reminding me of Christ's absolute imperative. But I am not sure that I shall know what the absolute imperative of Christ will tell me to do until I confront the concrete situation before which I shall have to take my stand. Nevertheless, my vision of Christ strongly pulls me toward the pacifist position. And meanwhile, I have made this much of a decision: So long as I walk in the dark, I want my errors, if I must err, to be on the side of the angels. I therefore intend to do my bit to keep my country out of war and to persuade her to adopt the constructive role of peacemaker and mediator in the present conflict, and to make the necessary sacrifices for the attainment of a just and durable peace. There are many rational and practical considerations which reinforce this fundamental decision. These help to keep my conscience temporarily in a state of relative peace.

A Personal Confession

Charles Clayton Morrison

'Life Situation Preaching'

The Christian Century Pulpit is planning a number of special issues, among which is one to include sermons dealing particularly with "life situations." Dr. Harold W. Ruopp, who recently contributed to the Pulpit two articles on this subject, has been asked by the editors to name six ministers to contribute sermons to this special number. Although Dr. Ruopp is aware that there are numerous pastors who preach effectively in this field, he has offered the following list of ministers as possible contributors, and all have accepted the invitation:

JAMES GORDON GILKEY
South Congregational Church, Springfield, Mass.

HAROLD C. PHILLIPS
First Baptist Church, Cleveland

HENRY HITT CRANE
Central Methodist Church, Detroit

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK
Riverside Church, New York

ROLAND G. HOHN
Methodist Church, Willmar, Minn.

MARK B. STRICKLAND
First Congregational Church, Stoneham, Mass.

These six sermons will appear in the SEPTEMBER number.

Another autumn issue will be given to sermons by the six ministers who have been voted by Pulpit readers the MOST EFFECTIVE PREACHERS in America today.

Another Feature Series Planned for the Coming Season.

During the fall and winter a series of "Preacher Problem" articles on various phases of preaching and sermon-making by professors of preaching in seminaries and other leaders in this field will be published in the Pulpit.

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